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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

July 24, 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Informal Report by Assistant Secretary of State,
Henry A. Byroade on his Recent Trip to the
Middle East - Wednesday, July 16, 1952

On Wednesday, July 16, the following members of the PSB staff,
members of Panel H, and guests attended a meeting to hear Mr. Henry A.
Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State, report on his recent trip to
the Middle East:

Dr. Raymond B. Allen
Mr. Edmond L. Taylor
Mr. Mallory Browne
Mr. John Sherman
Dr. Horace S. Craig
Mr. William Korns
Mr. Charles Norberg
Col. Paul C. Davis
Mr. Albert P. Toner
[REDACTED]

Mr. Richard H. Sanger-NEA/P, Dept. of State
Mr. Clarence Handershot-IIA, Dept. of State
Mr. Dudley Kirk-OIR/DRN, Dept. of State
Mr. Edwin M. Wright-OTI, Dept. of State
Mr. S. Shepard Jones-NEA/P, Dept. of State
Mr. Francis O. Allen-OIR/DRN, Dept. of State
Captain G. D. Roulland-Strategic Plans Division,
Office of Chief of Naval Operations
[REDACTED]

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Mr. Byroade explained that his trip had covered 17 countries, ranging
from Morocco to Burma, and including Greece and Turkey. While he averaged
only a couple of days in each country, he gained definite impressions of
what people are worried about in talking to local government officials,
businessmen, resident Americans, and others. He was exposed to many
problems, some of which are deep-seated and long-standing. His general
attitude upon his return is not an optimistic one.

The most difficult of all of the problems he identified as:

1. The French problem in North Africa;
2. British-Egyptian difficulties over the Sudan;
3. Iran;
4. Arab-Israeli relations;
5. Middle East defense problems in general.

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In the Arab world he saw evidences of much fear, of the Israelis, of each other, of the Russians, and of governments. In some cases, governments are dependant upon the army for their power. In certain countries, there is little connection between the government and the people. In the area, he was sometimes struck uncomfortably by similarities to China.

The French, British, and American positions in the region are not good. Great powers contribute relatively little to regional stability.

Mr. Byroade felt that the French situation in North Africa is not well understood here. One of our problems is how to handle public relations concerning disputes which find us in the middle, for example, between the French and the North Africans, or between the British and the Arab States. He felt that it is to our advantage to see French interests maintained and strengthened in North Africa. He was thinking particularly in terms of Europe, where insufficient French strength (economic, financial, etc.) could result in the failure of our aims. In turn, he felt that the loss of their position in Africa would be an intolerable blow to the French. The necessary solution lies in reform programs which, for example, in 10 to 14 years would give the North Africans internal autonomy. We feel that the promise of some such benefits by the French is necessary. Then we can give more public support to the French and build Franco-American solidarity in North Africa.

The new French program in Tunisia is good in certain respects, but lacks a timetable. Neither the Arabs nor the French are happy with it; but it is unlikely that any French Government could do better at the moment. The Schuman Government received its first personal censure and Pinay also suffered when this issue went before the parliament. The program at the moment is in negotiation between France and the Bey. An early solution of this issue is very much to be desired; it will probably come up this fall in the General Assembly.

The Moroccan problem is more serious. The Arabs are stronger there, the potential for trouble is large, and probably the French will not do much until trouble breaks. Moreover, if the Moroccans and Tunisians were given independence today, many of the local leaders, particularly in Morocco, would probably be less interested in political reform than the French.

Mr. Byroade said that he now has greater hope for an Anglo-Egyptian agreement than he had when he left Egypt; but the prospects are still not too hopeful, although we are still working on the problem. Farouk is making a good legal case to show that he has always had the title of

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King of the Sudan. But the British feel they can not recognize him as such, because of their pledges to the Sudanese. Unlike eight months ago, a quiet settlement is probably not now possible. It is not likely that any Egyptian Government could give way on what they consider a good legal position. Emotions are also strong in London, where it is felt that the Sudanese must not be "sold down the river". While this issue remains unsettled, the Egyptians refuse to talk about canal defense or other problems.

It may be that Egyptian Governments will grow successively weaker until the return of the WAFD. Hillali fell recently over failure to get the British out and failure to clean house locally. Success in the former probably would have permitted him to succeed in the latter. Egypt is still a propaganda leader in the Arab world, and a stalemate there can be disastrous for Britain in the Middle East, with important implications for us. The British have traditionally had a positive (e.g. commercial) interest in the region, unlike ours, which was primarily negative and concerned with security. We want stability in the area and a building up of strength; but at the moment, the situation is unstable and may get worse.

As for Iran, Mr. Byroade felt that Mossadeh will not give in while he is in office. Many Iranians feel that he is heading for disaster, but support him, at least in demonstrations, and refuse to attack him on personality or performance, but a bitter contest is in process over his request for direct powers. If he goes, and both sides behave reasonably, an oil settlement probably can be reached. At that time a communist coup is possible, but not likely.

Prospects of an Arab-Israeli solution are not bright. Our policy is criticised throughout the Arab States, but especially in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Arab refugee situation is grim. Years of camp life with nothing to do results in human deterioration and apathy. To some extent, Arab leaders have kept the issue alive for the sake of world sympathy. Bold Arab leadership is required to tell the refugees that they can not go back home and that they must find a solution elsewhere. No leader is strong enough to say this. Probably the only hope is to correct the present tension by gradual steps. No dramatic solution is available, but constructive action, especially on the Israeli side, is possible.

In Jordan, a group of refugees refused to move into more comfortable and permanent quarters newly constructed, because they felt that to do so would change their status. But in Syria, a net gain to the country might be achieved by combining economic development with refugee resettlement. Any such program would have to be undertaken very carefully and carried out in terms of Syrian interests.

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Mr. Byroade wondered about the future of Israel in a hostile Middle East. He felt that the essentially urban population of the country is not too well adapted to, or interested in farming, and that there is an uneconomic emphasis on farm mechanization. The United States has been providing emergency aid. It would be dangerous in terms of their own interests for the Israelis to plan to continue indefinitely on that basis. Also, as long as we continue each year to give more in aid to the Israelis than to millions of Arabs, we do not appear to be impartial.

The Arab-Israeli relation is essentially an iron curtain situation in which the attitude of the young generation will be very important. Many Arab leaders fear new conflicts in about 20 years. In the absence of some normalization of relationships and a breaking down of the isolation of Israel, such fears may have foundation.

In Turkey he found firm ground for the first time on his trip, in the economic and financial sense and in the sense of military strength and morale.

The picture in Greece was not so bright. It is difficult to envisage a real economic solution, for the government is very unstable.

As for the defense problem of the area, one of the basic difficulties is fear. In some cases military aid would have "fifty times" the beneficial effect of economic help, although the latter is needed. There is some feeling in the region that we do not care whether they survive. Thus a little judicious assistance will go a long way.

Probably the idea of a Middle East Command under a British commander is not suitable, but probably something can be done in the way of a defense organization, perhaps along the lines of a planning board for the cold war, with Arab participation. The problem of how to approach the Arabs on this subject is a difficult one. It is desirable that they have a feeling of participation in building the institution. It is not feasible to include the Israelis in an original defense arrangement and develop Arab support at the same time. It is hoped that the Israelis might be brought in later.

Asked whether, in view of some of his impressions of the problem of Israel, we should change our official propaganda line, Mr. Byroade emphasized the difference between talking and doing. The Arabs see our performance, but do not believe what we say. It is necessary to approach the problem steadily and unemotionally. He felt that this problem is understood better in America than it was three or four years ago. Some doubts have arisen about the types of aid which we have been giving to Israel.

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In terms of basic U. S. security interests, and in view of the current French and British positions, we can not continue to ignore the Arab world as we have appeared to. We must improve our position in Arab eyes. We must develop friendly relations on a personal basis and not rely on money and legal contracts. Also, our people in the field must avoid the appearance of running around uncoordinated with no visible product resulting from their activities. But he said that he is not too critical. It is difficult to get large programs under way; and he felt that TCA is doing an excellent job in Iran and generally makes a good approach to the area, although some changes are required. He felt that we tend to estimate what a country basically needs and to lump all the remedies into TCA. He suggested that it would be better to return to long-range, low-pressure Point IV programs. Then any additional measures required, such as dam construction, should be handled separately as development projects.

The feeling of exposure to danger is responsible for a considerable amount of neutralism in the area.

In response to a question, Mr. Byroade explained that it is not likely that our assistance to Egypt would take a comparable form to our program in Greece, where we started under peculiar conditions of civil war. In Egypt, our programs will more likely take the form of military equipment, security agreements, etc. He agreed with the suggestion that it might be useful to make more visible demonstrations of U. S. strength in view of the feelings of insecurity in the area which accompany the decline of British power there. But, on the other hand, the peoples of the area are not too anxious to have foreign power actually planted on their soil.

Mr. Byroade said that on the preceding day he had seen for the first time the outline of the PSB plan for the area. He felt that it was a good substantive approach to study the peoples and attitudes of the area before making recommendations. He felt that efforts of this kind must be continued since the individual USIE and other approaches do not quite master the total situation.

Mr. Byroade said that in talking to our specialists in Morocco about our information policy, he found that there are certain things about which we are unable to talk, such as anti-Communism, American freedoms, etc. and that at least casual thought had been given to saying nothing for the moment. We must get out of these positions where we can't say anything.

When asked, he said that the problem of picking and supporting future leaders is a difficult one, but that perhaps we can do more about supporting the right groups.

The effectiveness of communist agents is difficult to assess, but it is evident that no major communist effort is under way. While weak "fifth columns" exist in certain urban centers, they are poorly led, poorly coordinated and are constantly broken up by internal feuds or by the police. They have nothing like Russian-type leadership.

Greater Turkish leadership in the area which might be beneficial is difficult for the people to accept, because of lingering impressions of the Ottoman Empire. Also, the Turks, having identified themselves with Europe, are not too anxious for the role. But specific projects, like the training of Syrian officers in Turkey, do help to bring stability.

The Turks do not have their own cultural information programs in the Arab states, and any such activity would be suspect, if the local inhabitants felt that we were the sponsors. But he agreed that it would be desirable to strengthen by inconspicuous means, the interest of the peoples of the area in Americans.

Finally, Mr. Byroade observed that the Arabs think of us basically as a great nation and an essentially good one, in spite of the one great mistake which they feel we have made concerning their interests.

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